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ABSTRACT

One of the most frequent criticisms of doctoral preparation in reading is the lack of training and guidance in the area of teacher education. Often graduate students are assigned as teaching assistants, either initially assuming full responsibility for selected undergraduate sections with little preparation or else beginning by assisting a professor in a course, assuming primary responsibility for a section of the course later on. A couple of strategies which might be initiated to strengthen the teacher education component of doctoral preparation are the seminar, like the one developed and offered at the State University of New York at Albany in the summer of 1974, and a practicum which has yet to be initiated although selected components are operational. (Outlines of the seminar--with lists of references, sample modules, and audiotapes--and the practicum are included.) (JM)

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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY

DEPARTMENT OF READING

PREPARING TEACHER EDUCATORS IN READING

Richard Allington

Probably the three most recurrent criticisms of doctoral preparation in reading are: 1) a lack of training, experience, and guidance in conducting quality research on the various aspects of reading and learning to read, 2) a lack of breadth and depth of study on theoretical and philosophical aspects of the reading process; and 3) a lack of training and guidance in the domain of teacher education, with which this paper is concerned. The other two areas of criticism have been discussed more frequently and most doctoral programs provide at least a cursory introduction to research areas in the nature of coursework. However, few doctoral programs in reading, or in most other fields for that matter, provide any planned preparation in college teaching or teacher education. This deficiency seems even more glaring when one considers that those who earn doctorates in reading are more likely to engage in teacher training at some time in some capacity, than they are to engage in educational research. This paper is not an attempt to undermine the valid criticisms of weaknesses in the other areas but rather to present some suggestions for training better teacher educators.

The Status Quo - Evidently, college teaching is seen as a rather uncomplicated process. In many institutions doctoral students are assigned as teaching assistants, assuming full responsibility for selected undergraduate sections, with little or no preparation beyond being presented a course outline and suggested text.

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Perhaps it is assumed that since many graduate assistants have taught at other levels, and all have extensive experiences as students, offering a teacher education course should present few problems.

At other institutions doctoral students do begin as teaching assistants--assisting a professor in the preparation and delivery of a teacher education course. After this initial breaking in period, the student is then assigned primary responsibility for a section of the same course. While probably a better approach than the one previously discussed, it still seems quite far from an ideal preparation for the teacher education aspect of a doctoral program.

Regardless of the type and quality of preparation the graduate student receives prior to beginning college teaching little seems to be done in most programs in the formative evaluations of the student as a college teacher. While most institutions require that instructor rating forms be completed by the students enrolled in a teaching assistant's course, too often the ratings are summed and filed with little regard to the nature of the evaluation. It is true that if the ratings were strongly negative action would undoubtedly be initiated but, in general, too little effort is made to use these rating forms as formative assessment tools.

The Triple-T fellowship program was designed to improve college teaching and in many institutions innovative programs were developed and initiated. Some of the suggestions made later in this paper stem from participation in such a program.

However, like all too many other externally funded programs, when funding vanished so did major components of the innovative program. Today the profession is left with several institutions with reputations for producing excellent researchers and others which produce students with strong backgrounds in theoretical and philosophical issues concerning the reading field. However, no institution seems to have a national reputation for producing excellent teacher educators, professors who are innovative and exciting in the classroom. It does not seem that producing researchers, theoreticians, philosophers, and outstanding teacher educators are necessarily mutually exclusive goals. That some programs choose to emphasize one area over another is understandable and probably desirable as long as no area is excluded.

This brief introduction should suffice since most readers will be familiar with the current state of the art. What follows are some strategies that might be initiated to strengthen the teacher education component of doctoral preparation. The seminar described is a revision of a seminar developed and offered at the State University of New York at Albany during the Summer Session, 1974. To this point the discussion has focused primarily on pre-service education, though the seminar, as should any training program, included an inservice education component. A practicum has yet to be initiated, though selected components are operational. Both elements are basically exploratory in nature. Exploratory for both the graduate students and the professor. Since college teaching, like teaching at other levels, involves adapting a style that fits both the nature of the content and the personal style of the instructor, any attempt at improving the delivery skills of teacher educators must necessarily allow for exploration of various approaches to the task.

They are also exploratory in the sense that they are only initial developmental attempts.

A Seminar: Preparing Teacher Educators in Reading

Seminar Topics:

A. A discussion of models of college teaching experiences

B. The preparation of teachers: past and present

C. The preparation of teachers: training, education, and learning.

D. Preservice education goals and assessment

E. Preservice education methods: Traditional lecture based, Field based.

F. Preservice education methods: CBTE, pro and con

G. Preservice education methods: CBTE, a discussion with Teacher Corps interns, faculty, and cooperating teachers.

H. Preservice education methods: Combs Humanistic model vs. CBTE vs. Traditional lecture based.

I. Preservice education: developing goals, classes, and programs

J. Inservice education goals vs. preservice education goals

K. Inservice education methods: traditional approaches, involvements, Universities and School Systems.

L. Inservice education methods: needs, assessments

M. Inservice education methods: Flanders' Interaction Analysis, IOTA, peer review, and professional review

N. Inservice Education: developing goals, classes, and programs

O. The Teacher Center Concept for both preservice and inservice education

P. Evaluating Teacher Educators and Teacher Education Programs

Assignments:

Visit five classrooms of teacher educators employing a variety of instructional strategies e.g. lecture, discussion, direct involvement, simulation, multi-media, self-pacing, audio-instructional, etc.

Develop a self-instructional module involving knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Produce a video-tape for either instructional or assessment purposes for use in a teacher education program.

Develop and deliver a simulation exercise for use in a teacher education program.

Suggested Texts:

Combs, A. W.; Blume, R. A.; Newman, A. J.; Wass, H. L. The Professional Education of Teachers, 2nd Edition, Boston: Allyn Bacon, 1974.

Austin, M. C., Morrison, C.; et. al., The Torch Lighters: Tomorrows Teachers of Reading, Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1961.

Commission on Public School Personnel Policies in Ohio Report Number 6: Realities and Revolution in Teacher Education, Cleveland: Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation, 1972.

Ransom, G. (ed.), Evaluation of Teacher Education Programs In Reading, Newark: International Reading Association, 1973.

Moburg, L. G., Inservice Teacher Training in Reading, Newark: International Reading Association, 1972.

Otto, W. and Erickson, L., Inservice Education to Improve Reading Instruction, Newark: International Reading Association, 1973.

Aaron, I. E.; Callaway, B. and Olson, A. V., Conducting In-Service Programs in Reading, Newark: International Reading Association, 1965.

Articles:

May, F. B., "Some Practical Suggestions for Developing Competency-Based, Independent Study Modules for Teacher Education," Journal of Teacher Education 23 (Summer, 1972), pp. 155-160.

Allington, R. L., "A Rationale for the Competency-Based Education of Reading Teachers," Journal of Reading 17 (April, 1974), pp. 517-523.

Popham, J., "Minimal Competencies for Objectives-Oriented Teacher Education Programs," Teacher Education

Maxwell, W. D., "PBTE: A Case of the Emperor's New Clothes," Phi Delta Kappa 55 (January, 1974).

McDonald, F. J., "Evaluation of Teacher Behavior," in Houston and Howsam (ed.), Competency-Based Teacher Education, Chicago: SRA, 1972.

Smith, W. L., "First Steps First," in Houston and Howsam, ob. cit.

Smith, F., "The Politics of Ignorance," in Sr. R. Winkeljohann (ed.) The Politics of Reading: Point-Counterpoint, Newark: IRA, 1973.

Zedler, E. Y., "Better Teacher Training-The Solution for Children's Reading Problems," Journal of Learning Disabilities 3, (February, 1970), pp. 106-111.

Fibkins, W., "The Whys and Hows of Teacher Centers", Phi Delta Kappa, 55, April, 1974, pp. 567-569.

Affleck, M., "Producing and Using Video-Tapes in Preservice Education," in N. B. Smith (ed.) Reading Methods and Teaching Improvement, Newark: IRA, 1971.

Sample CBTE Modules:

University of Houston

Taylor, T. REA-003.00 (HOU), Summer, 1972.
"Teaching with the Use of a Basal Reader"

Taylor, T. REA-004.00 (HOU), Summer, 1972.
"Diagnosis in Reading"

Taylor, T. REA-005.00 (HOU), Summer, 1972.
"Reading Study Skills"

University of Georgia

Scott, K. and Raesch, B. GEM-ERD #1
"Teacher Behaviors for Teaching Word Recognition Skills"

Mason, G. E., et. al. GEM-ERD #6
"Classroom Management for Reading Instruction"

Rystrom, R. C. and Scott, K. GEM-ERD #11
"Notes from a Linguist-General Language Principles"

Michigan State University

Bader, L. A., 1974
"Effective Reading: Relating Reasoning Process in Reading to Subject Area Goals."

LaPere, J.; Parish, M.; Ulrich, R. and Watson, J., 1973.
"History of Children's Literature"

Duffy, G. and Roehler, L.
"Ed 475: Psycholinguistics"
"Ed 475: Continued Professional Growth"

University of Washington-Teacher Corps

Dimmit, N. M. and Foster, C. D., 1973.
"A Model for the Preparation of a Teacher Training Module"

University of Vermont-Teacher Corps

Wheeler, A. H., 1970.
"Motivation for Wide Reading: An Individualized Reading Program."

"Individualized Instruction Through the Use of Children's Literature."

State University of New York at Albany - Teacher Corps

Fleming, J. T., Balknave, K. and Ganales, D., 1973.
"Reading Assessment, Inventories, Diagnosis and Selection of Instructional Materials"

"Re-examining Assumptions about Language, Thinking, and Reading"

Allington, R. L.
"Differentiation Instruction in Secondary Content Areas"

"Direct Vocabulary Instruction"

Audio-tapes:

Broudy, H. and MacDonald, F. "CBTE: Pitfalls and Pipedreams" speech at SUNYA-CBTE Conference, November, 1973; cassette.

Schneider, A. "CBTE: The Future" speech at SUNYA-CBTE Conference, November, 1973; cassette.

Massanari, K. and Dickson, G. "CBTE: A Lecture" presented at SUNYA, November, 1973; cassette.

Daly, P. "CBTE: The AFT View" presented at SUNYA, November, 1973; cassette.

Popham, J. "Developing CBTE Programs" presented at SUNYA, November, 1973; videotape.

A Practicum: Preparing Teacher Educators in Reading

A practicum might follow the seminar proposed above. Several elements that might be included are outlined below.

Teacher trainers in training would be initially assigned to a professor to assist in the development and delivery of a course. This assignment should allow open discussion and plenty of give and take by both participants. Both the professor and the teacher trainer in training should have several of their sessions videotaped for mutual critiques. As the teacher trainer in training develops confidence and ability additional responsibility should be assigned.

Following this semester long session the teacher trainer in training might be assigned primary responsibility for the delivery of a course which has been developed in cooperation with the professor who supervised the initial practicum stage. Throughout the delivery of this course, a necessary component is the self evaluation and external evaluation, perhaps through the use of videotapes. This would be supplemented by the student evaluations which might be collected more often than the traditional end of course method.

Underlying this preparation is the need for a constant emphasis on formative evaluations. The goal is to develop teacher educators who have the ability to train teachers. It is of utmost importance that the teacher trainer in training feel free to discuss, argue, and explain. There is no single model of teacher education which has a particular advantage in each of the varied courses and experiences that comprise the professional education component of teacher preparation.

Teacher educators can improve teacher education and planned programs to improve teacher educators have too long been missing from our doctoral programs in reading.